



KENT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



COUNTY OF KENT

WILLIAM WEBB, HEALTH OFFICER
125 S. LYNCHBURG STREET, CHESTERTOWN, MARYLAND 21620 • PHONE: 410-778-1350

STATE OF MARYLAND

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Media Contact: Charlene Perry, Public Health Emergency Planner

Phone: 410-778-1050 **Email:** charlene.perry@maryland.gov

Division of Public Health Announces Potential Hepatitis A Exposure at Two (2) Additional New Castle County Restaurants and Updated Timeline

Update #1: The Division of Public Health (DPH) provided updated information regarding a potential Hepatitis A exposure at a Buffalo Wild Wings food establishment in Middletown, which was announced on Thursday, April 11, 2019.

New information indicates that potential exposures began earlier at the Middletown restaurant than previously reported, therefore the timeframe for which DPH is providing guidance to restaurant staff and diners has been updated. As part of its ongoing investigation, DPH has also determined that exposure to the Hepatitis A virus may have also occurred at a second Buffalo Wild Wings location in Bear, as well as the Stone Balloon Ale House in Newark.

Staff who worked at these food establishments during the indicated timeframes should contact their health care provider to receive post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), which may include the hepatitis A vaccine or a shot of immune globulin to prevent severe illness.

Diners who ate at these food establishments during the timeframes, and **who fall into a high-risk category** should contact their primary health care provider for further risk assessment and guidance. Though the risk of diners contracting Hepatitis A after dining at the establishments is low, post-exposure treatment may be considered for high-risk individuals in these categories:

- People with chronic liver disease, including cirrhosis, Hepatitis B, or Hepatitis C
- People who are immunocompromised
- Women who are pregnant
- Anyone with jaundice or symptoms compatible with Hepatitis A
- People who use drugs (injection or non-injection)
- People experiencing homelessness
- Men who have sex with men (MSM)
- People who are, or were recently, incarcerated

Diners who ate at these food establishments during the timeframes **and are not in a high-risk category**, are recommended to contact their health care provider to discuss their individual risk factors. Those without a healthcare provider can contact the KCHD at 410-778-1350.

Updated Food Establishments and Timeframes:

Buffalo Wild Wings, 540 W. Main St., Middletown – New information indicates that potential exposures began earlier than previously reported. Potential exposures began on March 28, 2019 and ended with the voluntary closure and cleaning on April 10, 2019.

Stone Balloon, 115 E. Main St., Newark – Potential exposures began on March 20, 2019 and ended with a cleaning of the facility on April 3, 2019. The timing of the cleaning at this facility was not related to the potential exposures, but would have ended the exposure window.

Buffalo Wild Wings, 1887 Pulaski Highway, Bear – Potential exposures began on March 21, 2019 and ended with the voluntary closure and cleaning of the facility on April 12, 2019.

DPH’s Office of Food Protection and Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology continues to work with restaurant management on the investigation to ensure staff at these locations are aware of the recommendations to receive PEP. “We understand that this information may be concerning to individuals who dined or worked at any of the restaurants during this timeframe,” said DPH Medical Director Dr. Rick Hong. “However, we want to stress that the risk of transmission of the virus to those who dined at these restaurant locations is low.

Not everyone has symptoms. Symptoms usually appear 2 to 6 weeks after being exposed and can include:

- Loss of appetite
- Nausea or Sick to the stomach
- Vomiting
- Tiredness
- Fever
- Stomach pain
- Brown-colored urine and light-colored stools
- Yellowing of the skin or eyes

If symptoms develop contact a healthcare provider immediately. There is no specific treatment for hepatitis A infection. Generally rest, fluids and good nutrition is all that is needed. The best way to prevent Hepatitis A is by getting vaccinated. Careful hand washing, including under the fingernails, with soap and water, is an important tool to prevent the spread of this disease. For more information about Hepatitis A, visit www.cdc.gov/hepatitis, or call the KCHD 410-778-1350.

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